

**MEMORANDUM, DCD #16, 2021-22**

To: Faculty, University of Toronto Scarborough  
Cc: CAD Members, University of Toronto Scarborough  
Chris Garbutt, Executive Director, Marketing & Communications  
From: William A. Gough, Vice-Principal Academic & Dean *WAG*  
Date: 22 October 2021  
Re: **Plans for Winter Term**  
Note: For broad distribution

Dear instructors,

Thank you for your continued good work in delivering on our academic mission, particularly during the last nineteen months as we operate within the changing limitations imposed by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am writing to update you on our plans for the Winter term.

Last spring, we began our thinking about the Winter term starting with the assumption that it would largely consist of in-person delivery of our courses and we messaged this to students, prospective students, faculty, and staff. We have not deviated from this basic plan but we have heard concerns from you. As we approach the term, we are getting more detailed questions and we wish to address these in this communication.

As permitted by the Province, we are not required to social distance in our classrooms and so our classrooms will return to regular capacity in the Winter. However, as was the case in the Fall term, all students and instructors must be masked in classrooms. We note that outside of classroom spaces we remain in Step 3 of the Province's reopening plan which includes social distancing and crowd size limits, as well as required masks.

The University has imposed a vaccine mandate on students, staff, and faculty, and we have high compliance rates. Nonetheless, members of our community, including some of those with children under the age of 12 who cannot be vaccinated yet, have expressed concerns about returning to the classroom in person, particularly for large enrollment settings. I have met with the Deans at UTM, FAS, and FASE to learn from the challenges they have faced and are facing; the latter two have had more substantial in-person teaching this Fall term. As a result of these and other discussions, we will be providing instructors who have courses with enrollments that exceed 200 two options: to either to remain in-person with WebOption, or to have the lectures go online while other elements of the course, including tutorials, laboratories, and major evaluative elements, remain in-person. I note that the small number of Y courses that began in September online will remain online. Consistent with the other divisions at U of T, we will consider other exceptions on a case-by-case basis, noting that some of these involve considerations that need to be confidential. Such requests need to be raised with Chairs, who will provide recommendations to me for approval.

WebOption will be prioritized for the 200+ courses that remain in person, as well as for courses in which there are AccessAbility needs. Courses with enrollment below 200 can be WebOptioned, although we may not be able to meet all requests.

Some have asked what happens if instructors become ill or become exposed to someone who is symptomatic. We are guided by the experiences at U of T Scarborough in the Fall as well as in other divisions at U of T. If instructors are able to deliver material online, this can be done for a short period of time, with appropriate communication to students in the class. If instructors are not able to lecture, other options can be explored - e.g., guest lecturing, cancellation of lecture.

Related to this point is the expectation of greater student absenteeism as we continue to navigate the pandemic, since students are not permitted to come to campus if they are unwell or become exposed to someone who is symptomatic.

The University will be extending the self-declaration of illness tool for students for the Winter term. Drawing on important pedagogical learnings from the pandemic, we continue to encourage instructors to plan with universal course design principles in mind and to build flexibility into grading structures, particularly with respect to alternatives to in-person participation. We also ask that instructors proactively plan their course materials (e.g. slides, notes) so that students who are not able to attend are able keep up to date as much as possible on lectures and related course content.

For health and human rights reasons, a very small number of individuals in the community have been exempted from the vaccination; they are required to do bi-weekly COVID testing. For all groups - students, staff and faculty/instructors - vaccination or exemption must in place to participate in the in-person academic activities in January. All members of the university community are expected to complete UCheck each day that they come to campus for daily attestations about COVID risk factors, and can be required to show a “green screen”.

A communication from my office with further details about classroom protocols as we prepare to return more fully to in-person instruction in January, as well as teaching-related resources and supports for the Winter term, will follow in the coming weeks.

Once again, I thank you for your invaluable work in fulfilling our academic mission.